

**Calling attention to a matter of urgent public importance**  
**re: Unsatisfactory supply of foodgrains in Bangalore City.**

**Sri T. R. SHAMANNA (Fort).**—Sir, I call the attention of the Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies to the inadequate and unsatisfactory supply of foodgrains to the residents of Bangalore.

**†Sri B. VITHALDAS SHETTY (Minister of State for Food and Civil Supplies).**—Sir, my attention has been called to the inadequate supply of foodgrains in Bangalore City.

Hon. members are aware that there is no statutory rationing in Bangalore City, that there is no restriction on the flow of foodgrains into the city and that the consumers are free to buy any quantity of foodgrains from dealers. What is obtaining is only Informal Rationing, under which issues are made to the public depending upon the stocks of foodgrains available with the Government, to supplement the availability in the open market at reasonable prices.

The rice that we have been making available through the public distribution system is from (a) allotments from the Government of India from the Central pool and (b) paddy procured within the State. The Central allotments have been stopped from August 1968. We had, therefore, to depend entirely on internal procurement of paddy for sustaining the public distribution system. By the end of December 1968, practically all the rice stocks with Government from earlier procurement were exhausted and, in the absence of any allotment of rice by the Central Government, we had perforce to reduce the scale of issues of rice in Bangalore City. Procurement under the Paddy Levy Order for the 1968-69 season no doubt commenced in November last year and by now we have built up a sizeable stock of about 80,000 tonnes of paddy. But the procured paddy being wet, it will take some time before it is milled and made available through the public distribution system. In the circumstances, I made a special request to the Government of India for an emergent allotment of 5,000 tonnes of rice and I am glad to inform the House that they have done so. As a result, we have been able to enhance the issues from 50 per cent to 75 percent of the normal issues.

I should like to point out here that the policy of the Government is so to adjust the distribution that we are in a position to make liberal issues through the Fair Price Shops at a time when the ruling prices in the open market are high and the consuming public is really in need of such issues at reasonable prices. At present no such exigency exists. I may be permitted to say that this being the post-harvest season, there is an easy availability of grains in the market and the ruling prices are also not high, particularly on account of a good harvest. In fact, the current ruling prices are much less than those prevailing at the corresponding period last year. The House will agree with me that it would be prudent to conserve the stocks of rice available with the Food Department for issue during the lean months to come.

While we are not wholly satisfied with the quality of rice issued through Fair Price Shops, I would like to mention that a number of steps have been taken to improve the quality. Strict instructions have been given to the staff at all levels to pay particular attention to quality control at procurement, milling and distribution points. All the retail agents have been instructed to return any sub-standard rice that they may receive from the wholesalers and the Department has made arrangements for replacing such stocks by good quality grains. So far as wheat is concerned, it cannot be admitted that wheat is generally bad, even though the allotments now being received in the State are from the older stocks held by the Government of India. Nonetheless instructions have been issued to the concerned people that wheat should be issued to retailers only after due cleaning wherever necessary. Retailers have also been advised to return any bad quality stock of wheat which they might have received in spite of these instructions and to take back good grains.

Because of the liberal allotment of wheat by the Government of India in the last few months, we have built up a comfortable stock of wheat and are now in a position to make liberal issues. The quantity of wheat issued from the Fair Price Shops has been doubled and consumers are enabled through special permits to make bulk purchases of wheat to the extent of one quintal per card per month. Wheat products like maida and sojee are also available in plenty in the Fair Price Shops as well as in the open market. This should more than make up the shortfall in the issues of rice.

Hon'ble Members are aware that till the month of November 1967, the entire production of sugar in the country was controlled and was available for issues by the Government. The State Government, at that time, used to get a monthly allotment of 7,938 tonnes of sugar. We were issuing this sugar not only to domestic consumers, but also to bulk consumers and industries. Subsequent to the partial decontrol of sugar, under which 40 per cent of the production was released for the open market, the State Government's allotment was reduced to 5,036 tonnes. As a result of this reduction, we were forced to confine the issues of sugar primarily to domestic consumers and leave others to buy their requirement from the open market. As a result, we were able to maintain the issues to card-holders at the same level as before.

From the sugar-month January-February 1969, the allotment to the State has been increased to 6,387 tonnes per month. We have, therefore, been able to issue an extra kg. of sugar per card per month in Bangalore City. Additional requirements will perforce have to be met by purchases in the open market where it is freely available. It would be appreciated that the scale of issue of sugar through the Fair Price Shops would depend on the allotments made by the Government of India to the State.